

HISTORY of CHRIST CHURCH
PARISH of HOLY TRINITY with CHRIST CHURCH
Grafton Road - Worthing

PARISH ADMINISTRATIVE ADDRESS

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*All that the Father gives me will come to me, whoever comes to me
I will never drive away*

John 6: 37

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**THE HISTORY OF CHRIST CHURCH, GRAFTON ROAD,
WORTHING**

Christ Church was built between 1840 and 1843

Christ Church and its burial ground between Grafton and Portland roads has the distinction of being the first church in Worthing built in the gothic revival style. Christ Church was the first Parish church in the town centre, and the only one with a surrounding graveyard.

Christ Church was built by subscription between 1840 and 1843. It cost £4,500. By 1851 c. 380 attended the morning and evening services.

The church was assigned out of Broadwater and received Parish status on 31 July 1855, and created a 'district chapel'. With help from Queen Anne's bounty, a house for the incumbent was built in Westbrooke by 1859.

The Parish extended from the coast to Teville Road and between Heene Road and the line of Chapel Road & South Street

In 1865 - 400 sittings were ordinarily let besides 42 seats in the chancel at the height of the season, thus Christ Church became the first "Parish Church of Worthing" although never officially so designated. In 1865 galleries were built in the transepts to increase still further the accommodation.

In 1876 the church was redecorated with selected texts of worthy scripture on the walls.

At the same time the tower room was refurbished and the West Gallery enlarged.

It is now central Worthing's most conspicuous flint building.

In 1884 there were two Sunday services and an afternoon service for the children, but the congregation had been reduced, partly by the building of Holy Trinity Church, Shelley Road to the south west of Christ Church.

Parish Staff Team

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THE SOUTH GALLERY

Was traditionally known as the 'fisherman's gallery'

The organ has been sited here since 1970

THE ORGANS of CHRIST CHURCH

Organ made in 1892 by J.J. Binns of Leeds, was purchased from a Methodist Church in Rochdale. It has the reputation of being an 'excellent instrument'.

The present organ was installed in 1970, it is a splendid three-manual instrument giving much enjoyment and satisfaction (and not just to the organist!).

Originally, it is thought that the installation of a small instrument in the tower, the details of which are not known, may have coincided with the formation of the parish in 1855.)??

In 1893-4 the west gallery was removed and the choir and organ were removed to the chancel.

Further major redecoration took place in 1954.

Christ Church original design was by John Elliott of Chichester and was apparently altered by the curate of St. Paul's, as a result of strong criticism by the Cambridge Camden Society. There were also disputes between Elliott, the curate, and the Rector of Broadwater who had given the site.

The church is the first example of the gothic revival in Worthing. It is of flint with brick dressings, and originally consisted of a chancel, aisled nave, transepts, west tower, and vestry.

Galleries were built in the transepts in 1865-6, and the church was restored and improved in 1876.

In 1894 the chancel arch was re-designed and other alterations were made.

The church was again restored in 1908.

Christ Church was consecrated on 21 September 1843 by Reverend Ashurst Turner Gilchrist [Bishop of Chichester] as the second chapel of ease to Broadwater.

It was designed to provide seating for 900 of which 500 were to be free and unappropriated for the 'poorer classes of worthing'

Christ Church has played a major role in parochial service to the poor particularly during the period 1860 to 1890. it provided a workman's reading room, a soup kitchen,[the building is situated on the east side of Grafton Road about 25 yards from the Church and is still in commercial use to day – but look for the plaque], a coal and clothes club, a "want" district fund and a special Mission to Seamen.

It provided an elementary school for girls and infants in 1861, which was situated on the west side of Portland Road [the flint stone building now used as a fitness club] and one for boys. In 1870, until recently the church hall, [the east side of Portland Road, halfway down walking south towards Shelley Road] and now converted into dwellings, but still known as Christ Church flats.

In 1865, galleries were built in the north and south transepts. In 1876 the church was redecorated with selected texts of worthy scripture on the walls.

At the same time the tower room was refurbished and the west gallery enlarged.

In 1893-4 the west gallery was removed and the choir and organ were removed to the chancel.

Until 1953, the interior was painted with elaborate decoration.

A further major redecoration took place in 1954.

Christ Church is Worthing's most conspicuous flint building and still retains the original cobbled flint wall surrounding the church yard.

THE EXTERIOR

The walls of the church are medium to large flints some knapped; an interesting detail is the 'garret ting', [frequently called] 'gal letting', i.e. the insertion of flint chips and hakes in the mortar.

The 'stone' dressings are not entirely what they seem. The 'quoining' is actually specially manufactured | greyish cream brick/terracotta blocks some of which have weathered to reveal a reddish interior colouring.

These brick blocks were an 'experiment' and delayed the building of the church but they reduced the cost.

Recent restoration of the tower has used similar cream blocks but mistakenly some were made pink from the outset.

Unusually there are 6 entrances to the church.

THE TOWER

Is 85 feet high and there are 111 steps to the flag pole. Good views of Worthing, the downs and the sea.

The bell made in 1843 by Thomas Mears at the Whitechapel foundry.

THE INTERIOR

Nave The delicate proportions of the arcading have always drawn favourable comment. The 1849 guide states "long slender shafts of Caen stone support the arches under the clere story which conduce to a light and graceful effect in the interior.

A distinctive feature is the stained pews with tall ends- large carved Fleur de Lys finials and latched doors.

The roof is of exposed pitch pine - nine tie beams each with king posts and struts... timbers of diamond cusped design tie beams supported on brackets resting on small corbels of varying design,

THE CHANCEL

The roof is of dark pine, a three bay hammer beam design; similar timbers: ends of beams bear coloured armorial shields.

The tiling which extends some way into the nave